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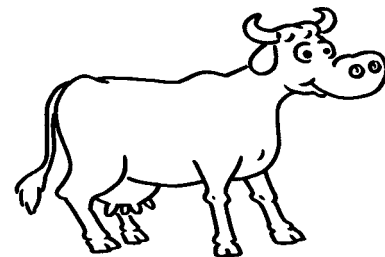
December 18, 2003

MILK PRODUCTION

Milk production in the 20 major States during November totaled 11.6 billion pounds, down 0.2 percent from November 2002. October revised production, at 12.0 billion pounds, was down 0.1 percent from October 2002. The October revision represented an increase of 0.1 percent or 13 million pounds from last month's preliminary production estimate. Production per cow in the 20 major States averaged 1,509 pounds for November, 13 pounds above November 2002. The number of milk cows on farms in the 20 major States was 7.71 million head, 82,000 head less than November 2002, and 10,000 head less than October 2003.

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Milk Cows and Milk Production: by Month, 20 Selected States, 2002 and 2003

Month	Milk Cows ¹		Milk Per Cow ²		Milk Production ²		2003/ 2002
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	
	<i>Thousand</i>		<i>Pounds</i>		<i>Million Pounds</i>		<i>Percent</i>
January	7,749	7,807	1,591	1,607	12,327	12,548	1.8
February	7,744	7,810	1,472	1,484	11,401	11,588	1.6
March	7,745	7,811	1,654	1,660	12,810	12,969	1.2
April	7,758	7,798	1,621	1,622	12,575	12,645	0.6
May	7,769	7,783	1,678	1,668	13,039	12,983	-0.4
June	7,782	7,775	1,587	1,590	12,348	12,366	0.1
July	7,781	7,765	1,578	1,590	12,281	12,345	0.5
August	7,785	7,750	1,570	1,563	12,223	12,110	-0.9
September	7,781	7,744	1,497	1,503	11,648	11,643	---
October	7,789	7,720	1,539	1,552	11,991	11,978	-0.1
November	7,792	7,710	1,496	1,509	11,657	11,637	-0.2
December	7,801	---	1,575	---	12,290	---	---

¹ Includes dry cows. Excludes heifers not yet fresh.

² Excludes milk sucked by calves

AGRICULTURAL PRICES

November crop prices were up from the previous month in Maryland. Winter wheat prices increased thirty-four cents per bushel and barley price increased fifty cents per bushel from October. Field crop prices are also up with corn and soybean prices up twenty-two cents and twenty-six cents

per bushel, respectively. Livestock prices were mixed. Calf prices were down to \$2.40 per cwt, while beef cattle were up \$3.80 per cwt. Hog prices increased to \$40.50 per cwt. Egg prices neared a dollar, averaging \$0.956 per dozen for the month.

Prices Received, Maryland, Delaware & United States, October & November 2003

Commodity	Unit	Maryland and Delaware			United States			
		NOV 2002	OCT 2003	NOV 2003	NOV 2002	OCT 2003	NOV 2003	PARITY PRICE
Dollars								
Wheat, Winter	BU	3.66	3.08	3.42	4.18	3.37	3.64	9.82
Corn	BU	2.85	2.39	2.61	2.28	2.12	2.24	6.71
Barley	BU	1.60	1.83	2.33	2.81	2.77	2.56	6.65
Soybeans	BU	5.78	6.96	7.22	5.46	6.61	7.37	14.70
All Hay, Baled	TON	149.50	160.00	163.90	93.20	84.40	80.70	----
All Beef Cattle	CWT	64.40	86.90	90.60	67.30	92.00	93.20	163.00
Calves	CWT	70.00	94.90	92.50	91.90	113.00	112.00	219.00
Hogs	CWT	28.70	38.30	40.50	27.80	36.80	34.80	104.00
Broilers	LB	.555	0.330	.309	0.280	0.370	0.370	-----
Turkeys, Live	LB	----	----	----	0.398	0.386	0.407	0.999
Eggs, Market	DOZ	.623	0.797	.956	0.559	0.703	0.926	1.61

¹ Revised.

Index of Prices Received, United States, November 2003, with Comparisons

Index and Ratios	November 2003	October 2003	November 2003
<i>1990-92=100</i>			
All Farm Products	97	113	117
All Crops	104	111	116
Feed Grain & Hay	104	96	100
Oil- Bearing Crops	*97	* 111	126
Fruits & Nuts	*109	*119	109
Livestock and Products	89	116	118
Meat Animals	*86	116	116
Dairy Products	*91	* 115	114
Poultry and Eggs	96	117	125
Ratio ¹	76	87	90
Prices Paid Index	125	130	130

* Revised

¹ Ratio of index of prices received by farmers to index of prices paid.

FARM LABOR

There were 1,197,000 hired workers on the Nations farms and ranches during the week of October 12-18, 2003, down 1 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 891,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 306,000 workers. Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.05 per hour during the October 2003 reference week, up 10 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.42 per hour, up 8 cents from last October, while livestock workers earned \$8.64 per hour compared with \$8.42 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.47 per hour, was up 11 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 40.2 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down fractionally from a year ago. The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers over last year occurred in the Northeast I (New England and New York), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi) and Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) regions and in California and Florida. In the Northeast I and II regions, rain and strong winds slowed field activity, reducing the demand for hired workers. The 2003 U.S. hired worker annual average wage rate was \$9.08, up 3 percent from the 2002 annual average wage rate of \$8.81. The U.S. field worker annual average wage rate was \$8.31, up 19 cents from last year's annual average.

Farm Labor: Employment And Wage Rates, United States, October 12-18, 2003, with Comparison ¹

Farm Employment	October 6-12, 2002	July 6-12, 2003	October 12-18, 2003
		<i>Thousand</i>	
Hired Workers	940	*943	891
150 Days or More	685	*680	626
149 Days or Less	255	*263	265
Agricultural Service Workers	271	320	306
Hired Farm & Service Workers	1,211	*1,263	1,197
		<i>Hours Per Week</i>	
Hours Worked Hired	40.4	*39.8	40.2
		<i>Dollars Per Hour</i>	
Wage Rates for			
All Hired Workers ^{2 3}	8.95	8.88	9.05
Type of Worker			
Field & Livestock Combined	8.36	*8.26	8.47
Field	8.34	*8.17	8.42
Livestock	8.42	*8.57	8.64

¹ Excludes AK.

² Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates

³ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers

JANUARY CALENDAR

MON				
			1 HOLIDAY	2 Dairy Products Poultry Slaughter
5	6	7	8 Broiler Hatchery	9 Crop Production Grain Stocks Winter Wheat Seedings
12	13	14	15 Broiler Hatchery	16 Milk Production
19 HOLIDAY	20	21 Broiler Hatchery	22	23 Livestock Slaughter Noncitrus Fruits and Nuts- Preliminary
26	27	28 Broiler Hatchery	29 Chickens & Eggs Vegetables - Ann.	30 Agricultural Prices Cattle Chickens & Eggs Hogs & Pigs

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